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AGO ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 21ST SIGNAL GROUP
APO 96240

SCCVNG-OP

11 November, 1966

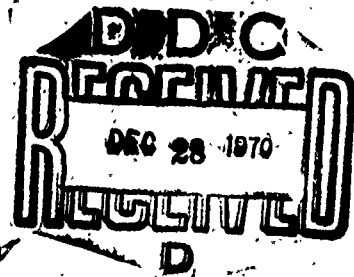
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lesson Learned (RCS CS FOR-65) Quarterly
Period Ending 31 October 1966.

TO: Commanding General
1st Signal Brigade
ATTN: SCCVOP
APO 96307

Transmitted herewith is one copy of Headquarters, 21st Signal Group
Report, Subject: same as above, for indorsement and forwarding through
Operational Control channels to the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force
Development, Department of the Army (ACSFOR, DA,) Washington, D.C. 20310.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

FORREST R. REDDEN JR.
CPT SIGC
ADJUTANT



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(ARMY) ATTN: FOR-OT-UT, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 21ST SIGNAL GROUP
APO 96240

SCGVNG-IN

2 November 1966

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned (RCS CSFOR-65) for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1966.

SECTION I
SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION OR UNIT ACTIVITIES

1. General: The period 1 August to 31 October 1966 was marked by initiation of the Group Battalion "area of responsibility" concept, arrival and activation of new units in-country, and the activation of several communications systems. With the arrival of two Battalion Headquarters Detachments, one Combat Area Battalion, one Signal Support Company, and the activation of two Advisory Battalions, the Group strength increased from 2000 men to 3800 men. The I and II Corps Tactical Zones were divided into six areas, with a battalion headquarters assigned to each area. The result was a redistribution of responsibility within the Group for communications support in the I and II Corps Tactical Zones.

2. New Units: The 73rd and the 509th Signal Battalion Headquarters Detachments arrived in-country in August. The 73rd was deployed in Cam Ranh Bay to support the US Logistical Complex. The 509th was deployed in An Khe to support the 1st Air Cav Mobile Division. In late August the 278th Signal Company arrived and was deployed at Phan Rang with platoons in Pleiku and Tuy Hoa. Two Advisory Battalions were activated, the 37th in the I Corps Zone, and the 43rd in the II Corps Zone with headquarters at Da Nang and Pleiku, respectively. The 459th Signal Battalion (CA) arrived at Nha Trang in late October to support the US Logistical Complex and the 9th ROK (White Horse) Division.

3. Activities: Headquarters 21st Signal Group marked the first anniversary of its activation on 1 September 1966 at Nha Trang, Vietnam. The 21st Signal Group was activated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina on 1 September 1965 out of the resources of the 73rd Signal Battalion.

4. Personnel and Administration:

a. During the 1st Quarter 1967 the assigned Group strength went from 2000 men to approximately 3800 men. The Group authorized strength increased from 2200 on 1 Aug 66 to 5300 on 31 Oct 66. This strength increase resulted from the activation of two Signal Advisory Battalions and the arrival of a Signal Support Company, two Battalion Headquarter Detachments, and a Combat Area Signal Battalion. Although some personnel replacements were received the losses exceeded the gains. During one 15 day period in August the Group lost 20% of its assigned personnel. This high turnover of personnel during such a short period reduced the effectiveness of the Group. Major accomplishments for the first quarter 1967 are as follows.

b. Personnel and Administration procedures and SOP's were published for the Group. In growing from one to six battalions standardization of personnel and administrative procedures was mandatory.

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c. The responsibility for reports was shifted from the unit personnel section to company headquarters which resulted in improved personnel account ability. Since the Group is dispersed over some 40,000 square miles, accurately accounting for personnel was impossible. By placing the impetus for this accountability on the company commander serious morning report errors which had existed were corrected and subsequent reporting was accurate.

d. Upon becoming operational on 1 July 1966 no records were available to indicate what personnel had been requisitioned for the Group. In addition numerous operational requirements were planned for the Quarter with no known personnel requisitions submitted to cover these requirements. The Group Personnel Section first requisitioned all personnel shortages throughout the Group. Secondly since scheduled losses were high throughout the Quarter those personnel losses were requisitioned for the next 5 months. Finally, a study was conducted to determine future operational requirements and personnel were requisitioned accordingly.

e. On 1 Aug 1966 there was no known set of figures to indicate what the Group was authorized in personnel. Numerous MTO&E's were planned or submitted but the only real basis for authorizations was USARPAC General Order 258. By reconstruction of this general order with its many changes and finally adding known additional operational requirements, an actual personnel authorization by grade and MOS was determined for each unit within the Group. This provided a base for promotions, requisitions and personnel replacements. The final authorizations determined from GO 258 were considerably different from those generally felt to be correct prior to 1 Aug.

f. Improved personnel actions have resulted from making the parent unit responsible for all administration of personnel assigned to that unit regardless of location. Unit personnel officers and company commanders have an improved sense of responsibility in insuring that their personnel are properly paid, promoted and receive the necessary "personal" personnel and administrative support.

5. Intelligence: Physical and Defensive Security:

a. A program was initiated to conduct physical and defensive security inspections of Group facilities located in the I and II Corps Tactical Zones. In total there are 54 sites in these two zones. The program entailed one announced inspection per week by the S-2/3 staff section and unannounced spot inspections as required.

b. A total of 19 inspections were conducted during the quarter beginning 1 September 1966 when the inspection program was initiated. Signal sites inspected were considered to be capable of defending themselves in a satisfactory manner. Based on these inspections and on reports from assigned battalions all sites have appropriate perimeter Defense Plans, Air Defense Plans, and Fire Plans based on local command requirements.

c. During the inspections conducted by the S-2/3 staff it was found that various signal sites had experienced delays in the filling of requisitions for fortification material, perimeter fencing, and lighting equipment. Investigation revealed that in some instances the proper channel for requesting material was not used. This situation was remedied by obtaining guidance from 1st Logistical Command on proper requisitioning procedures.

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6. Training:

a. A total of 18 enlisted men and 6 officers from the 21st Signal Group attended the MSQ-73 school conducted by the 1st Signal Brigade Signal School during this quarter.

b. The AN/GRC-106 NEI Team conducted a one day familiarization course for operators and maintenance personnel in Nha Trang, Pleiku, and Da Nang. A total of 63 21st Signal Group personnel attended this training.

7. Operations:

a. The 21st Signal Group remained operational throughout the entire reporting period.

b. The installation of a single sideband (AM Voice) radio net between this headquarters and the headquarters of subordinate battalions has greatly enhanced command communications capabilities. Frequent delays, in passing important traffic had been encountered due to the high demand use of telephone trunks. With the installation of this radio net, messages can be passed expeditiously. The system has received a high degree of use and has decreased reaction time in the areas of administration and operations.

c. During the period of this report, 16 additional radio systems were put into operation. These systems consist of 9 VHF systems and 7 Tropo systems. This represents a 78% increase in Tropo systems and a 17% increase in VHF systems. It may be noted that proportionally much more emphasis was placed on installing Tropo systems than VHF. This is due to the greater advantages of this equipment in that it has a much higher channel capability and a much greater range.

d. In the field of wire operations, eight new switchboards were installed and one SP-86 was replaced by an AN/MTC-1. Of the new switchboards installed, three were modified AN/MTC-9's, to be used as long distance switchboards. The modification consisted of the addition of plug supervision equipment, AN/TTA-6. Initial installation of this equipment introduced technical difficulties into the system. Problems in establishing proper ringing capabilities were mainly attributed to lack of qualified installation personnel. Recent technical assistance received is correcting these deficiencies.

8. Logistics:

a. GENERAL DISCUSSIONS: During October 1966 two battalions were activated. Plans and instructions were published governing activation of these units. Supply codes and accounts were established for the units and requisitions were submitted for shortages of authorized equipment.

9. Aviation: a. The Group aviation posture was improved by the introduction of 2 U6A aircraft and turn-in of two C1 aircraft. In addition three UH1^B helicopters were received in place of a crash damaged aircraft and as substitutes for UH1D helicopters.

b. Aircraft utilization figures for the period of the report are as follows:

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	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUGUST</u>	<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Total Hours Flown:	114	271	203	618
Total Missions Flown:	136	176	189	501
Total Cargo Hauled:	13 tons	16.5 tons	7 tons	36.5 tons
Total Passengers Flown:	174	464	483	1121

c. Quarterly Averages:

Quarterly Average: Availability

	<u>U6A</u>	<u>UH-1</u>	<u>OL</u>
USARV	77%	69%	80%
21ST SIG GP	84%	64%	76%

Quarterly Average: Hours Flown

	<u>U6A</u>	<u>UH-1</u>	<u>OL</u>
USARV	48	64	60
21ST SIG GP	53	47	37

10. Force Development:

a. General: During this quarter two Battalion Headquarters Detachments, one Combat Area Signal Battalion, and a Signal Support Company arrived in-country to support the communications mission of the 21st Signal Group in the I and II Corps Tactical Zones. Two additional advisory Battalions were activated in-country bringing the total number of battalions within the Group to six. Upon arrival of the last battalion, the new Battalion "area of responsibility" concept was adopted whereby I and II Corps Tactical Zones were divided into six areas, each area being assigned to a battalion. Certain tactical "tailoring" was initiated to align the battalion structures with their assigned missions in each area. In addition Area and Site Commanders were designated for the six Battalion areas and 54 Signal Sites within the I and II Corps Tactical Zones. This was done in accordance with 1st Signal Brigade Regulation 10-1.

SECTION II

COMMANDERS OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Part 1, Observations (Lessons Learned)

1. ITEM: Critical Personnel Shortages (Personnel)

a. DISCUSSION: Critical enlisted personnel shortages have remained the most significant problem throughout the Quarter. The two most critical shortages were switchboard operators (MOS 72C) and Teletype Operators (MOS 72B). Each MOS remained at 50 percent strength throughout the Quarter. In addition the shortage of supply personnel (40% strength) seriously af-

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affected many of the supply actions and reports throughout the Group. The shortage of power mechanics (MOS 52B) (50% strength) also affected the Group's ability to maintain its large number of power units. Cross trained personnel could not be used effectively to replace these shortages, because there were neither overages nor extra personnel in any MOS which would provide a source of personnel for cross training. ✓

b. OBSERVATION: These shortages will likely remain critical since personnel losses continue to exceed gains and operational requirements are increasing.

2. ITEMS: Suspense Requirements: (Personnel)

a. DISCUSSION: A problem area exist in that Suspense requirements are extremely difficult to meet. This results from the Group being dispersed over a large area and correspondence handling time, courier service, and electrical transmission time is often slow. Studies were conducted to determine the optimum method of handling most types of written communications and the air courier services offered the most advantages being faster than handling traffic through the area communications Centers.

b. OBSERVATION: The study concluded what suspense times should be established at each level of command, however in many cases adequate time is not allowed for those action units to adequately respond to requirements.

3. ITEM: Sub-Delegation of Authority: (Security)

a. DISCUSSION: Newly arrived units in-country have been hesitant about requesting authority for validation of security clearances Crypto Access, and to grant Confidential clearances.

b. OBSERVATION: Units should be fully prepared before leaving CONUS to deal with all personnel security matters. Especially in the area of Crypto Access. The newly arrived units could be integrated into command nets, assume more active roll and become operational sooner if the Battalion S-2 section is familiar with personnel security.

4. ITEM: Cross Training: (Training)

a. DISCUSSION: The present system of cross training individuals of one MOS in another MOS in order to fill critical personnel shortages in a specific MOS entails little or no formalized training. The individual who is to be cross trained is normally placed in the critical slot and undergoes a vigorous on-the-job training session until he is sufficiently familiar with the MOS to accomplish the minimum requirements. This type of cross training/OJT program increases the length of time required to cross train personnel and in many cases requires the individual to absorb information too fast, resulting in poor performance of duty.

b. OBSERVATION: Consideration should be given to initiating one-week technical courses in MOS's for which there are critical shortages of personnel. These periods of instruction should give the individual being cross trained the basic fundamentals of the new MOS. After undergoing the initial instruction, personnel could be placed in the OJT program for further training. Implementation of this program could be accomplished at Brigade level

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by a team of qualified instructors on TDY to the general location where a requirement exist.

5. ITEM: Modified Manual Telephone Central Office AN/MTC-9: (Operations)

a. DISCUSSION: The plug supervision equipment AN/TTA-6 utilized to modify the AN/MTC-9 for long distance switching capability has proved difficult to install and maintain. The principal problem is in establishing a ringing path over the long distance trunk circuit. It was found that upon introduction of this equipment into Vietnam, qualified operation and maintenance personnel were not available. In addition, the publications available were incomplete. Technical assistance has been received and qualified technicians are presently working on the problem. However, it has not yet been solved.

b. OBSERVATIONS: Prior to the introduction of new equipment to RVN, technically qualified instruction teams should be provided to instruct personnel on installation, operation, and maintenance of this equipment. Equipment manuals and publications should be complete and accurate before equipment is released to RVN.

6. ITEM: Communications Technical Control Center AN/MSQ-73: (Operations)

a. DISCUSSION: The AN/MSQ-73's are to be utilized as control centrals for major communications centers within RVN. To prepare for the arrival of this equipment in Vietnam, a school to train controllers on the functions and operations was initiated and sites were prepared to accept equipment. Upon arrival of this equipment a lack of qualified installers, and technical representatives existed in this command. Due to this problem, installation was considerably delayed and the capabilities of the equipment were not fully understood or utilized. The AN/MSQ-73 has proven to be reliable, but it does not have the capacity to terminate all the circuit requirements in most locations.

b. OBSERVATIONS: AN/MSQ-73's, although reliable within their capabilities, do not have the capacity to terminate all circuits and systems within the major communications centers. This makes the control and installation of circuits much more complicated due to the necessity for distribution frames and patch panels to carry the additional circuits. Upon arrival into Vietnam, the lack of qualified personnel to install and supervise the installation of the AN/MSQ-73 proved a delaying factor. This was an indication that technical personnel should be introduced along with new equipment to insure that adequate installation and maximum utilization of the equipment is obtained.

7. ITEM: Quality Assurance Team: (Operations)

a. DISCUSSION: The quality assurance team from CCCC represents the only team capable of testing communications systems in Vietnam. This team visits the communications sites to test and gather readings which determine the quality of communications and the maintenance problems within the systems. After the tests are completed, the team leaves and submits a report through channels for corrective action to be taken. The usual delay in receipt of the report and the lack of qualified maintenance personnel at the remote communications sites hamper the timely repair and improvement of the communication systems.

b. OBSERVATION: The quality assurance team has pointed out definite faults in many communications systems; however, the follow-up must be more timely in order to keep communications at a high standard. The time delay between testing and repair is the area which must be improved and this can be done by combining the test team with a maintenance team. This combination will enable the systems to be repaired and re-checked to insure that the system has been repaired and the quality standardized. This team also could be better utilized at Group level which would give an area coverage small enough to insure continuous follow up and improvement of communications.

8. ITEM: Replacement Aircraft: (Aviation)

a. DISCUSSION: The U6A received by the 41st Signal Battalion after IROAN experienced excessive oil leaks and required a propeller change 125 hrs after completion of IROAN. Investigation revealed that the engine had over 900 hours and was scheduled for change at 1200 hours. The propeller was unserviceable and required change prior to normal time change.

b. OBSERVATION: Aircraft being delivered to a combat zone should have no more than fifty percent life left on time change components. The shortage of parts, labor and facilities in Vietnam put an excessive burden on Direct Support units and accounts for unacceptable down time on a newly overhauled aircraft.

9. ITEM: Approval of MTOE: (Aviation)

a. DISCUSSION: The 21st Signal Group has been operational since 1 July 1966, however, the authorization for the aviation element MTOE has not been approved to date. Consequently the requisition of aircraft, personnel and equipment has been delayed. The Headquarters, 21st Signal Group has been provided air support by placing aircraft and personnel on temporary duty with the Group.

b. OBSERVATION: This arrangement is not satisfactory in view of the rapid growth of the Group and heavy support requirements.

10. ITEM: Frequent changes in unit supply officers, property book officers and unit supply personnel. (Logistics)

a. DISCUSSION: There have been frequent changes in unit property book officer appointments. Units are dispersed and because of this there is a high degree of dependence upon proper supply actions at unit level to assure adequate supply for these Signal Units.

b. OBSERVATIONS: The proper orientation of these unit supply officers is essential upon assumption of their duties. This group has established an orientation program and supply and maintenance procedures are explained to the new unit PBO by a special team of assistance personnel. Battalion staffs also conduct these orientations to provide coverage to the entire group area.

11. ITEM: Fluctuating availability of teletype paper and tape supplies.

a. DISCUSSION: The battalions of this group had experienced trouble obtaining adequate quantities of 7/8 inch size tape, and 3 copy 5 ply paper. Unit stocks of these items frequently were reduced to extremely low levels.

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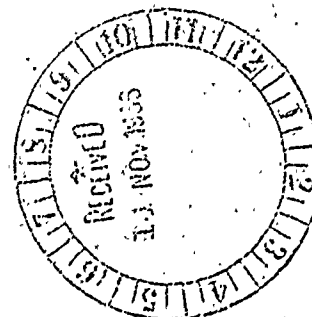
b. OBSERVATIONS: The group requested through US Army Depot Cam Ranh Bay, sufficient quantity of these items to provide a bulk issue of 30 day supply to each battalion based upon their forecasted consumption. These items are in distribution now. This action provides for a 15 day operating level and 15 day safety level. The safety level assures continued operation to last through intermittent periods of supply unavailability or fluctuating rates in quantities of receipt. All units submitted forecasts of their usage to their appropriate supply support channel.

Part 2, Recommendations (Lessons Learned)

1. The Group began operation with a headquarters of 46 officers and EM and one Battalion of 2200 men on 1 July 66. The TO&E as provided for in CONUS was not adequate to provide the command and control for the eventual 6 battalions scattered over an area of 40,000 square miles. It was necessary during the Quarter to provide additional officers, EM and equipment from present in-country resources. Personnel and equipment for an augmented headquarters should have been approved and provided prior to departure from CONUS.

2. Guidance was received that normal stockage of PILL would be 15 days and that USAFV Regulations would be changed reducing authorized unit stock level from 30 days to 15 days. Average fill time is 22 days on unit requisition. Demand supported items should be stocked as 15 day operating level plus 15 day safety level total, 30 days until such time as order and shipping time provides the items in 15 days. This is particularly important to remote signal sites and units. Letter with this recommendation has been submitted through command channels IAW prov para 6-9 AR 735-35.

HUNTER L. SHARP
COL SIGC
COMMANDING



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SCCVOP (11 Nov 66)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for Quarterly Period ending
31 October 1966, (RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE (USASTRATCOM), APO San Francisco 96307

2 DEC 1966

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army,
Washington, D.C. 20310

1. Forwarded for your information two copies of the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the 21st Signal Group.

2. Concur in the observations with exceptions and comments as follows:

a. Item 1, Critical Personnel Shortages. On 9 September 1966, this headquarters initiated an emergency requisition through Headquarters USASTRATCOM for processing at Department of the Army. A total of 1,530 enlisted personnel were requested including the MOS shortages listed in basic. This shortage area resulted from shortfall in requisitions submitted during March through May when the brigade headquarters was organizing. Fill action is expected in the next 60 days.

b. Item 2, Suspense Dates. This headquarters is aware of the difficulty the 21st Group has in receiving correspondence in a timely manner. Extreme leniency is provided the group on suspense dates except where suspense dates are fixed by higher headquarters and an extension is denied. This area should improve in the six months due to upgrading of the communications system and improvement and expansion of the USARV courier system.

c. Item 4, Cross Training. Concur in part. At present there are 40 MOS's which are considered critical in the brigade. This shortage prevents the organization of qualified instructor teams. As soon as personnel and other resources for instruction are available, training courses will be developed to assist subordinate commanders in MOS training.

d. Item 5-6. This headquarters is aware of the problem created by the introduction of equipment new to the Army inventory into Vietnam and included its observations in its Operational Report. Manuals and other publications for the AN/MTC-9 have been requested from CONUS. As soon as these are available, a mobile training team will be organized to provide assistance at the sites involved. In the case of the AN/MSQ-73, a school for technicians is being conducted by the brigade utilizing qualified civilian contractor personnel as instructors. The availability of equipment on which to train delayed this school so that trained personnel were not available at all sites when the equipment arrived. As more individuals complete this course this problem will be solved. As stated in the 1st Brigade's report equipment new to the Army inventory,

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SCCVOP

2 DEC 1966

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for Quarterly Period Ending
31 October 1966, (RCS CSFOR-65)

when introduced into Vietnam should be accompanied by the appropriate manuals and qualified operational personnel.

e. Item 7, Quality Assurance Teams. Concurs in part. It is the position of this headquarters that the maintenance and improvement of communications is the responsibility of the operating unit. There is an acute shortage of quality assurance technicians and test equipment, to require these personnel to affect repair of the system would deter the entire program. Ideally groups should have their own quality assurance teams; however, the shortage of personnel and equipment precludes this capability.

f. Item 9, Approval of MTOE. MTOE 11-122F, for the 21st Signal Group which includes an aviation augmentation, was forwarded by this headquarters on 9 June 1966 to Headquarters USASTRATCOM. This MTOE is presently at Department of the Army for review and approval. Until the approved MTOE is received personnel and equipment for the aviation augmentation cannot be requisitioned.

3. Concur in the recommendations with the following comments:

a. Recommendation 1. This headquarters concurs in the desirability of modifying units prior to their deployment to Vietnam. However, sufficient experience must be available in-country to insure a realistic modification. At present six TOE's are being reviewed on the basis of in-country experience to recommend modification of units scheduled for future deployment.

b. Recommendation 2. In reply to a USARV query on PLL, 30 August 1966, this headquarters recommended that a 30 day level PLL be authorized. Also in reply to a query from the CG, USASTRATCOM as to the effectiveness of the "Red Ball" system, we recommended a 30 day level PLL. Change 1, USARV Regulation 750-3, dated 15 October 1966, restricts PLL to 15 days of supply. The 21st Group letter was forwarded to Headquarters USARV for consideration.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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WILLIAM A. HIGGINS

Colonel, SigC
Deputy

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AVHGC-DH (9 Nov 66) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 October 1966 (RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307 25 DEC '66

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 October 1966 from Headquarters, 21st Signal Group as indorsed.

2. Reference Paragraph 2, Part 2, Section II and Subparagraph 3b, 1st Indorsement: On 3 December 1966, this headquarters returned by indorsement the 21st Signal Group's request, approving an additional 15-day PLL for demand supported items only.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



W. R. AUTREY
Cpt, AGC.
Asst Adjutant General

1 Incl.
nc

GPOP-OT (11 Nov 66)

3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned For the Period Ending
31 October 1966 (RCS CSFOR-65)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 20 JAN 1967

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

1 Incl
nc

G. L. McMullin
G. L. McMULLIN
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

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